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ADVICE

TO THE

POOR;

WITH A

SHORT REMONSTRANCE

TO

THOSE IN HIGHER CIRCUMSTANCES.

By JAMES STOVIN, Esq.

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ADVERTISEMENT.

TO the little treatiſe that follows, the writer thinks it unneceſſary to prefix a long introduction: it may, however, be as well to ſay ſomething, particularly as it has of late been uſual to do ſo, and the Public ſeems very ready to enquire into every man's motive for publiſhing. Perhaps this has been chiefly owing to the writers themſelves, who are generally ready enough, when they cannot hope to obtain praiſe by what they ſay, to lay in a claim to it, by an avowal of the

moſt pure and diſintereſted intention in ſaying it.

This is, at leaſt, ill-judged. The Public is invited to read what is written, and if it is ſuch as tends to promote its welfare, it has no concern with any thing farther: what actuates the breaſt, muſt, after all that can be ſaid, be known fully only to the writer himſelf; and even when he diſowns the *hope of fame*, and the *love of gain*, he may, perhaps, remain ſtrongly ſuſpected, of having been incited either by the one or the other.

But are thoſe motives improper? I cannot ſay I think ſo. If a perſon of

education and ingenuity, in confined circumſtances, is deſirous of adding a pittance to his funds by contributing in any way to the entertainment or inſtruction of mankind, he is well entitled to his little earnings: he deſerves praiſe as well as a pecuniary reward.

Can the love of fame be arraigned? It has generally, notwithſtanding what it may now be thought proper to aver, been the ſtirring principle. Suppreſs all the books written from that motive, and moſt of the books worth reading will be deſtroyed. The love of fame inſpires noble ſentiments, and prompts to generous actions. It regards what is done, and the manner

in which it is done. A real, pure love for their fellow-creatures, might and would move many to teach them their duty, but it would never induce them to pay attention to propriety and elegance of compoſition. In a word, were it once to become faſhionable, to diſregard the praiſe of men, or what is much the ſame, to profeſs to diſregard it in literary purſuits, from that time would commence a period of deterioration, and, with a retrograde motion, they would return to the point from whence they ſat out.

All, however, that is meant to be ſaid is, that it appears improper in publications of this nature, for a writer

to

to declare to the world what his views in publiſhing are. Some muſt write for gain, and others will for fame, and it would be hard upon them, indeed, if their works ſhould remain unread, becauſe they were unable conſcientiouſly to declare, that the deſire of being ſerviceable to mankind was their only actuating principle.

Whatever an author may profeſs, his writings muſt finally be the beſt index of his motive; and even when there appears from them the very beſt intention, he muſt be content to know that the good deſign of them is not admitted by all. He muſt remember, that when the great Inſtructor of mankind

kind was on earth, it was ſaid, he "caſt out devils by the prince of the "devils."—That an Howard did good only to relieve his mind from the anxiety that preyed upon it, from his ill-treatment of his ſon:—And that the diſintereſted ſupporters of the Abolition of a traffic, iniquitous and black as night, are impelled by no better motives than a wiſh to gain popularity.

Boreas Hill,
April 16th, 1792.

J. STOVIN.

A D.

ADVICE

TO THE

POOR, &c.

THE preſent age has been called, by way of triumph, the age of humanity, and it certainly is not undeſerving the title. Knowledge, which till within the laſt two or three centuries, was hid from the bulk of mankind, now takes a wider range, and there are few who are buried in en-

tire ignorance. Such a portion of learning as will enable men to conſult the oracles of true ſcience, the Scriptures, will ſhortly become almoſt general, and as ſoon as that ſhall be the caſe, the Poor, I apprehend, will ſtand in need of but little farther inſtruction. To make them grammarians or geometricians would be unneceſſary, perhaps hurtful, and ſhould ever any of them ſhew a bent of genius for any particular ſcience, they will readily be put into the way to cultivate it. If along with the ſacred writings which they read, there ſhall occaſionally be publiſhed ſuch books as are adapted to their circumſtances, ſuch as mix ſome ſlight degree of amuſe-

amuſement with inſtruction, ſuch as may ſpread content and complacency through the weary circle of the cottage fire, the benevolent deſigns of thoſe who inſtituted Sunday Schools will be fully anſwered, and the ſphere of human happineſs conſiderably enlarged.

The writer of the preſent treatiſe ſits down with this deſign: whether he ſhall ſucceed in the execution, or not, he hopes to call the attention of others to the ſame ſubject; and he flatters himſelf his endeavour will not then be entirely thrown away.

There are few books, at leaſt that he knows of, written expreſsly with this deſign, and yet the Poor, or thoſe in low circumſtances, form by far the greateſt part of every ſociety; it always has been ſo, and ſo it muſt ever remain: laws may aboliſh titles; external marks of honour may be laid aſide among a people, but the moſt ſolid mark of diſtinction, wealth, can never be equally circulated, and perhaps the *Indigent* might not meet with a greater ſhare of reſpect, in a community where traders and merchants were ſupreme, than they do at preſent in thoſe kingdoms, where titles and riches form, as it were, a balance to each other.

Since,

Since, however, the diſproportion of wealth, though unavoidable, is an evil; ſince there muſt be men to labour, as well as men to enjoy; ſince a load, wherever placed, muſt remain a load, it ſhall be my buſineſs to point out ſuch circumſtances, as will tend to make the weight of it the leſs oppreſſive.

The bulk of mankind is born to labour; by the ſweat of their brow they are to eat their bread: the ſentence paſſed on man is executed upon the multitude, whilſt a few, a *ſeemingly* happy few, *appear* exempted from its conſequences. The huſbandman, for inſtance, wears out his life in toil; in every

every ſeaſon of the year the fields require his attention; ſpring, ſummer, autumn, and winter, brings each a renewal of cares and labours; and were he for a little while to neglect his proper duty, the uncultivated lands would rebuke his negligence. His grounds of tillage would produce but little grain, and his paſturage would be overgrown with weeds. Deſolation would ſpread over the face of the earth, and the eye, inſtead of being delighted with luxuriant meadows, and plenteous harveſts, would turn with diſguſt from ſcenes of wretchedneſs and want. Villages, towns, and cities, which depend on him for a conſtant ſupply of food, would be left without bread;

bread; famine would be felt in the ſtreets; and death in its moſt horrid ſhape would ſtalk around.—Theſe calamities would be the conſequence of the ſlothfulneſs of the huſbandman; and can he repine, becauſe his exertions are attended by ſome little wearineſs? Can he indulge in a ſtupid idleneſs at the expence of the lives of millions? Can he not ſee the neceſſity there is for his labour? That it ariſes from the inevitable laws of nature, or in other words, from the appointed will of God?—Beſides, if he could extend his views a little, he might be enabled to perceive, that all who are born in low circumſtances, are under the ſame obligation that he is. The ſailor, the me-

mechanic, all, by an indiſpenſable law of Providence, muſt act aright in their ſeveral occupations, or the order of ſociety would be overturned; ſome of the neceſſaries, ſome of the decencies of life would be wanting, and a ſtop put to thoſe movements by which it is ſuſtained. But not to confine myſelf to any particular order, have not all, who earn their daily bread by their daily labour, a thouſand things, if they would conſider them, to alleviate the hardſhips of their condition? They are commonly early enured to the ſtate to which they are deſtined, and it is very well known, that the body, as well as the mind, is reconciled to almoſt any thing by habit; ſo that what

would in reality be a very ſevere ſuffering to ſome, is performed by others with comparative eaſe; where the load is weighty, the ſtrength is commonly great; when the heat of the ſun is oppreſſive, or the rain pours down with violence, their frames, hardened by expoſure, are enabled without much riſk or inconvenience to bear it.—Hope, too, is cut off from none; the hope of bettering their fortunes, and advancing themſelves to higher ranks among men than they were born to, or have hitherto moved in. I do not ſpeak at preſent of religious conſolation, which I ſhall conſider afterwards, only of the deſire there is in the human breaſt, and which in itſelf is not illaudable,

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which tempts men to wiſh for eminence, even in this periſhing ſtate of things.—I fear I may be miſunderſtood, and therefore I will explain myſelf more at large. We are forbidden in our ſacred writings, "to "lay up treaſures on earth;" "to "care for the body," &c. but theſe injunctions are only given, I apprehend, to prevent us from having too great a regard for the world, and its fleeting pleaſures; and to inſpire us with an earneſt deſire for the happineſs of a future ſtate, which is clearly made known in thoſe writings only. What we meet with here ſtrikes the ſenſes, and gives immediate pleaſure; what will be the felicity of futurity, we know

know not exactly, and it *appears* at a diſtance; neceſſary was it therefore to be inculcated, that an overweening fondneſs for what cannot endure, what entices to immoral conduct, and produces a neglect of the ordinances of God, is highly blameable. This I conceive to be the true meaning of theſe, and ſimilar ſayings; nor does the religion of Chriſt prohibit men from active exertions in their ſeveral ſtations, nor from fixing a due value on the acquirements they ſhall be able to make by ſuch exertions.

There is, then, a field for hope even in this life, and thoſe who are forlorn and pennyleſs may, by induſtry and

patient perſeverance, lay up a little ſtore to enable them to educate their children with decency, and to put them into a way to return their care with a kindneſs that ſhall cheer them in the evening of their lives :—Or perhaps, by the bleſſing of God upon their honeſt labours, and if it ſhall be conſiſtent with his will for the good of all, a fortunate concurrence of circumſtances may ſupply them with the means of riſing to the ſtate they aſpire to—but I will ſtop here, it is not ambition I want to inſpire, I only deſign to tell them, that the ſituation of none is ſo low, ſo utterly deſtitute of comfort, that hope, which is ſaid to be the principal ingredient in human happineſs,

pineſs, cannot have room to enter; and that a reaſonable wiſh for the advantages of fortune is not blameable.

If then all mankind are placed by a ſuperior Power in their ſeveral ſtations, and hope is not excluded even from the loweſt, to what purpoſe is it to repine? If the burden muſt be borne, ſurely it will not become lighter by diſcontent! On the contrary, a patient ſpirit will enable the body to ſupport fatigues it would otherwiſe ſink under, and the early habit of labour muſt have made labour leſs toilſome. Whence is it, then, that we find the Poor ſo generally diſcontented?—The evil ſprings from many cauſes,

cauſes, and I mean to conſider ſeparately ſuch of them as appear to me worthy conſideration.

This ſpirit of diſcontent very often proves deſtructive to ſociety, and more than any other thing is diſtreſſing to the Poor themſelves.

The loweſt of the Poor are commonly ignorant; they can take but a narrow ſurvey of things; without knowledge derived from books, they know no more than what they can learn, in a ſmall circle in a town, or a yet ſmaller one in a village; finding that their lives abound with hardſhips, fatigues, hunger, neglect from

thoſe

thoſe in the ſame ſituation, and too often inſolence from men in a higher; they haſtily and raſhly, and erroneouſly conclude, that from their poverty ſprings all their ſufferings, and of courſe, that all who are not poor are happy: a great miſtake this, and teeming with miſchief; for as happineſs is what all men aim at: as the wiſh to attain it is natural and ſtrong, and muſt ever operate upon the mind, it is not to be rooted out, or even reſtrained: the proper road is only to be pointed out, and thoſe bye paths which ſeem to lead to it by a ſhorter rout, but are in fact only endleſs mazes, ſufficiently made known, that henceforth no unwary traveller may enter them without

out being forewarned of their intricacies.

Know, then, you who look with envy on riches, that what ſo ſtrongly attracts your fancy, is not really what it ſeems: you ſee a man with money to command every neceſſary of life, and every luxury, but you forget, that poſſeſſion deprives him of the quick ſenſe of enjoyment, and he in truth has no more ſatisfaction from his delicacies than you have from plain and homely fare; perhaps not ſo much. You, at leaſt, have good appetites; hunger and labour prevent you from nauſeating your food; but with him it is often otherwiſe. Not being com-

pelled by neceſſity to labour, he too often indulges himſelf in ſlothfulneſs, or I ſhould rather ſay, is ſunk in ſtupid liſtleſſneſs; for in ſloth there is no indulgence, till his body becomes unhealthy; he then loaths the moſt coſtly delicacies, and his affluence only embitters his anguiſh, by ſtrongly ſhewing him its inſufficiency to purchaſe one natural pleaſure.—Do you wiſh for the wines that furniſh his tables? Ah! little do you know the danger of the wiſh; they may produce a ſhort delirium of joy, but when reaſon returns, ſhe condemns herſelf for having been ſo deceived, and confeſſes that in intemperate mirth there is no happineſs.—You ſurely cannot

imagine, that from the ſplendour of dreſs, or equipage, or coſtly houſes, or extenſive pleaſure-grounds, there can ariſe true heart-felt content. The poſſeſſion of all theſe things is ſo familiar to the poſſeſſor, that he has no more enjoyment from them, than you have from your cottages, your Sunday ſuits of cloaths, or your little gardens. A ſudden acquiſition of wealth, to be ſure, may for a while ſo elevate a weak mind, as to produce a temporary felicity; but it cannot from its own nature continue: it is too often like a bladder, ſo fully diſtended with wind, that it burſts aſunder. A trifling legacy may have the ſame effect on you; if you uſe it with diſcretion, it

may

may prove highly uſeful; but if you neglect your occupations, aſſume a ſelf-confidence, and fancy yourſelves far advanced above your neighbours, the ſwelling ſentiment may for a time give you pleaſure, but the contempt of all around you will ſhortly convince you how powerleſs it is; that the ſatisfaction of ſelf-conceit is tranſitory, and that your minds to be at eaſe, muſt return to their ordinary level.

If the rich have ſome advantages, there are alſo circumſtances to balance againſt them; they have many cares, and anxieties of mind, that you know not of; and indeed a kind Provi-

dence has ſo ordered it, that the greateſt happineſs they can experience, I mean that their ſituation affords, and which is excluded from your's, is, the power they have of being extenſively ſerviceable to the Indigent: all other pleaſures mock their aim, and elude their graſp. Ought you then to envy their ſituation, or what will lead you to it, to be diſſatisfied with your own? Rather reflect a little on the bleſſings you do enjoy; be thankful for them, and endeavour to heighten, if poſſible, the happineſs of all around you.

You are endowed with as great natural capacities, as the richeſt, the moſt powerful, or the wiſeſt of men are.

are. You are placed in the ſame world, have the common benefit of the ſun, and every refreſhing breeze, are ſubject to no more diſeaſes, nor does death preſent to you a more terrifying aſpect; and the bleſſed and joyful hope of a reſurrection from the grave is extended equally to all.—All the pleaſures that are fitting and allowable, you are as capable of feeling as they. The ſolid comforts of domeſtic enjoyment; the endearments of infants, and affection and duty of children as they advance in age, none can more ſtrongly reliſh than you; and compared with ſuch bleſſings, the pomp and pride of Courts is a mere mockery. Such are the bleſſings you have

have in common with the rich; but you have ſome peculiar to your own ſtate, and which may perhaps be equal in the balance to thoſe which appear ſo much to outweigh them.

It is no new thing to compare your humble ſituation to the lowly vales, over which the winds ſweep harmleſsly, whilſt the mountain-ſides are ravaged by their fury; and the frequency of the remark ſhews ſtrongly, that it is founded in experience. By your ſituation you have leſs room for apprehenſion; and the dread of evil to come often poiſons the cup that ſeems to ſparkle with delight. "*The "want of riches,*" ſays an elegant writer,

writer, " is *generally* compenſated, by " having more hopes, and fewer fears, " by a greater ſhare of health, and a " more exquiſite reliſh of the ſmalleſt " enjoyments, than thoſe who poſſeſs " them are uſually bleſſed with."—If it is really ſo, and your ſituation is naturally more productive of hope, than a ſtate of affluence is, this alone might balance againſt the numerous evils you are expoſed to. But you alone are not expoſed to evils. The rich have their toils as well as you, and, perhaps, ſuch as you would not exchange for your own, were you but once fully acquainted with them.

Your

Your fatigues are corporeal only. After the long labour of the moſt ſcorching harveſt-day, a night of uninterrupted, quiet ſleep, reſtores your limbs to their former vigour, and your minds unoppreſſed, give a ſpring and elaſticity to the exertions of the body. But very different are the toils of the rich; their labours are the labours of the mind; and when the mind ſinks in laſſitude, what ſhall relieve it? That people who are poſſeſſed of the gifts of fortune, ſhould wear out their ſtrength in tilling the ground, or in manual operations, is unneceſſary, and would be unbecoming; but they are not left at liberty from reſtraints, and

ſtraints you may, perhaps, think more intolerable than your own. After a youth paſſed in ſchools and colleges, where one kind of ſtudy is, or ought to be, ſucceeded by another, they are called into the world, to apply to practical uſe, the ſkill and knowledge they have acquired.—You can never ſurely ſuppoſe, the ſtateſman, the lawyer, the phyſician, or the divine, has more quiet or more repoſe than you? And as for that numerous claſs of men, who ſeem born merely to conſume in ſloth, what the ſkill and induſtry of others provide, the neglect of all, and a ſtrong ſenſe of talents unemployed, and time unimproved, muſt prevent them, could you but

feel for a ſingle day what they feel, from ever being the objects of your envy.—In ſhort, it is ſo ordered, that the Poor muſt labour for their ſubſiſtence, and the ſubſiſtence of others; and thoſe poſſeſſed of wealth, ſtudy to ſecure the intereſt of the communities in which they live, to protect the perſons and the properties of individuals from inſult, to reſtore their loſt health, or to be a guard to their morals and conduct.

The great difference between the Poor and the Rich then is, that the Poor are chiefly engaged in bodily labours, and the Rich in the labours of the mind; that the employments

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of the former are generally conducive to health, and the avocations of the latter too frequently deſtroy it, by producing a peculiar kind of lowneſs of ſpirits, which the countryman is happily a ſtranger to. It is true, there are numbers of the affluent who entirely devote themſelves to pleaſure, but as this defeats the purpoſe of man's creation, to happineſs, as I before obſerved, they are unable to attain: in the midſt of their mirth is ſadneſs, their own hearts often reproaching them with the uſeleſſneſs of their exiſtence; and certainly, he who *feels himſelf* to be altogether uſeleſs in this life, can have but a ſlight hope of enjoying the rewards promiſed to bene-

volent exertion in the life that is to come.

I have dwelt the longer on this ſubject, being ſenſible that *diſcontent* is the parent of numberleſs evils, and that the Poor, if they can but once learn to conſider poverty in its true light, will ſubmit to it without repining.—They will perceive, that they, as well as all others, are placed in their preſent ſtate by an Almighty Power. That the burden laid upon them, they cannot by any method whatever remove, but that by a ſubmiſſive acquieſcence the weight of it will not be very ſenſibly felt. That by induſtry and œconomy, they may make ſuch

ſuch a proviſion for their families, as will enable them to procure all the neceſſaries of life. That riches do not, to a certainty, produce happineſs. That every family delight the poor man may partake of as well as the rich. That affluence has its labours as well as poverty, though different in kind, with care far more abundant; and that thoſe who wallow, as it were, in pleaſure, are entirely undeſerving the bleſſings beſtowed on them; are in a ſtate to call down the pity even of the indigent, as wretches who enjoy not the happineſs they ſeem ſurrounded with; and who are cut off by their trifling purſuits from the moſt ſublime of all hope, the

hope

hope of participating the felicity which is to be the future reward of uſeful labour and patient reſignation, in a life where they appear to be equally the indiſpenſable duty of man.

Diſcontent is thus certainly corroding: ſo long as it is confined within a man's own breaſt, as it were, it effectually baniſhes ſelf-enjoyment from thence: but it is very rarely, indeed, that it is limited to ſuch narrow bounds. A man diſſatisfied with his own ſituation, is not very far from envying that of ſome other; and envy among the poor and unprincipled, is ever ready to break out into acts

of violence.—Conſider, now, a moment the caſe of an individual;—a man with every ability for labour, and every habit that can render it eaſy, becomes, by having liſtened to the tale of the idle and profligate, ſullen and diſcontented. No longer riſing with the choriſters of nature, the "birds of heaven," that ſeem to pour out their little ſouls in melody to amuſe him, does he now cheerfully and contentedly, after offering ſhort prayers and ejaculations of praiſe to the God of all, betake himſelf with aſſiduity to the labour by which he and his family were ſupported. A poiſon has been infuſed into his veins, by which the whole maſs of his blood

will

will ſhortly be corrupted. Inſtead of the ſmiling face of innocence, behold the lowering brow of deſpair.—His little ones want bread;—the ſtrength of body that before was ſo uſeful, is now turned againſt ſociety; he ſallies forth to ſpoil, or, perhaps, to murder; and his own once-happy life is terminated by a death full of ignominy, and full of horror.—But ſuppoſing this a caſe that only rarely happens, ſtill is diſcontent, and envy its firſt-born, to be conſidered as the ſource of the idleneſs and diſſoluteneſs of manners, ſo much complained of, among the Poor.

Having

Having come ſo near the head of the ſtream, it would be an eaſy matter for me to follow it through all its windings, till it emptied itſelf into the ſtormy ocean of life; but ſufficient for my purpoſe will it be to trace a few of thoſe devious channels through which run the bitter waters that poiſon human enjoyment.

To *covet* what belongs to another, is, as far as the mind is concerned, to poſſeſs one's ſelf of it. The law of God is ſet at defiance, and the dread of human laws alone reſtrains from rapine. But it is evident, before we can covet, or have a deſire to ſeize what is not our own, we muſt firſt undervalue the thouſands of bleſ-

ſings which we have. A man whoſe appetite is ſatisfied, can never feel a craving for the delicacies of the moſt luxurious table.

He who by diligence in the operations of huſbandry, or ſkilful application to a trade, provides a ſupply for his family, and feels himſelf happy and contented in ſharing it with his wife and children, will ſeldom relax his ſucceſsful endeavours; will never loiter away his time in idleneſs. He will not leave his own fire-ſide, to ſpend his little leiſure in places of infamy and idle reſort.* He will remember that

* Gin-houſes, Ale-houſes, and other houſes of the kind, are the places where the diſſolute Poor ſpend too much of their time and money; and it is lamentable to conſider the ill effect it has upon their morals.

his

his offspring have a call upon him for all his earnings. A contented man will husband well his possessions.

As his own breast is serene, he will behold with satisfaction the happiness of such as are happy around him. His mind will be ever grateful to his Maker; and of any benefit or kindness he may receive from a fellow-creature, he will ever have a remembrance. Instead of rejoicing at any calamity that may befal his richer neighbour, he will find himself greatly hurt at it; he will assist him, if he can, in his distresses; his tongue will never utter reproaches; his voice will be the voice of compassion.

As his time will be all uſefully employed, he will have none to throw away on barbarous diverſions. A man happy in himſelf cannot be cruel. Is it poſſible, that he who rejoices in the happineſs of his own exiſtence, can wiſh to deprive the innocent brute-creature of its life? Can he delight in tortures and agonizing pains? No, none but men of turbulent paſſions have ſuch delights. None but corrupted hearts can derive a pleaſure from anguiſh.

As he will avoid what is ſavage, ſo will he ſhun what is illegal. He will have no reliſh for what are called the *ſports of the field*. He will have a high reſpect

reſpect for the laws of his country, and he knows it is contrary to thoſe laws to deſtroy the game, which is reſerved for others; birds and animals which are fed on grain and herbage none of his. Indeed the time that would be conſumed in ſuch purſuits, he would be ill able to allot to them, and were no human law broken, he would not be ſo ſimple as to give up the certain proviſion he makes for his family by induſtry, for the very uncertain profits he might make from the chace; and ſuppoſing for a moment, as has often been ſaid, the Game Laws * to be hard upon the Poor

* Nothing is a more common cauſe of contention than the Game; and the Laws relating to

Poor (and whilſt they continue in force, they ought certainly not to be broken)

to it, have by many been thought to be arbitrary. This is not the place for a diſcuſſion of that nature, which muſt be left to be decided by the great Council of the Nation; but I may have leave to obſerve, that if they do preſs hard on any body of people, it is not on thoſe in very low circumſtances, for they are prevented by that very lowneſs of circumſtances, from the purſuit of the Game as a diverſion; hunting and ſhooting are faſcinating amuſements, and when a poor man once gives his mind up to them, farewel all induſtry, all œconomy, and domeſtic comfort.—If they are not proper as a diverſion, they certainly never could be ſo with a view to gain: indeed, were that the caſe, the wild animals, which are purſued with ſo much earneſtneſs, would ſoon, in this populous kingdom, be all deſtroyed.—Poaching, as it is now carried on, is highly deſtructive of good morals among the Poor; for being a breach of a law, when

broken) ſtill the man, ſatisfied with his condition, would be always able to ſpend his time to more advantage, than in taking hares and partridges, even were he at liberty to do it.

I ſhall here cloſe the account of what I have to ſay on this part of the ſubject, and proceed to addreſs myſelf conciſely to the Affluent, whom I wiſh to put particularly on their guard

when once a man is in the habit of it, he ſoon learns to commit acts of more pernicious tendency: it is chiefly carried on in the night; and inured to nocturnal excurſions, he ſeldom confines himſelf long to what he meant at firſt only to deſtroy.—So long as the Game Laws exiſt, it becomes every one to endeavour to perſuade the Poor in his neighbourhood to be obedient to them.

againſt a paſſion to which they are particularly prone—the paſſion of pride.

That any human being ſhould be addicted to this paſſion, one would think, judging from the condition of man, his weakneſſes and wants, an utter impoſſibility, and yet a very ſuperficial view of life inſtantly ſhews, that ſcarcely any are exempt from it. How very few are there, who think of themſelves as they ought to think, who have not ſome fancied ſuperiority, of beauty, ſtrength, riches, or intellect, which raiſes them unreaſonably high in their own opinion? Low, indeed, muſt be the man who cannot find ſome one or other below him in

ſome

ſome circumſtance, over whom he may exerciſe the arrrogance of a haughty ſpirit! The man juſt above want, very often treats the poor and deſpiſed beggar, with all the inſolence and rudeneſs of accumulated wealth, with an inſolence he is ready enough to reſent when he himſelf is the object of it. The univerſality of pride, however, can by no means ſerve as an extenuation of it. That the Poor ſhould complain of it in the Rich is natural, and I dare ſay they do believe it confined to the higher rank, never even ſuſpecting themſelves capable of it; and indeed, as it ſeems *principally* to ariſe from riches, at leaſt to the height that is injurious to ſociety; as there

is ſomething in the poſſeſſion of wealth which wonderfully inflates the mind, I ſhall confine myſelf very much to the arrogance ſpringing from thence, and ſhall think my little trouble ſufficiently repaid, if the condition of even a few of the Poor ſhall be at all bettered by it.

Wealth is either hereditary or acquired. That one who is born amidſt proſperous affairs, whoſe wiſhes are all gratified from his youngeſt years, who finds a train of dependents in haſte even to anticipate them, ſhould aſſume ſome little ſelf-confidence, is not very ſurprizing: without great care in the education of a youth ſo cir-

circumſtanced, it would be more ſurprizing were it not ſo. But that thoſe, whoſe early condition has been expoſed to neglect and contempt, who have felt the oppreſſion of wealth, ſhould in their turn exerciſe the ſame kind of oppreſſion over others, appears ſo extraordinary, that were it not a caſe every day ſeen, it would be with difficulty believed. It ſeems, theſe people have in early life acquired ſuch narrow notions, as they are never afterwards able to ſhake off. Finding a certain air of dignity often attached to people of condition, they have miſtaken it for pride, and in imitating it, when fortune ſmiles upon them, they make themſelves as ridi-

culous as they are diſguſting. The danger is, that as their poſſeſſions increaſe, this prepoſterous folly will increaſe; for not being raiſed above their former equals, except by their money, they know no other way of keeping them, at what they think a proper diſtance, than a kind of ſupercilious churliſhneſs. Their former equals are ſeldom diſpoſed to pay them the deference they lay claim to, and a ſort of warfare is carried on between them, the one party always endeavouring to raiſe themſelves to an height they will never attain, and the other trying to reduce them to a level, they have undoubtedly ſprung from. Even thoſe, as I before obſerved,

ſerved, whoſe title to reſpect is thought to be leſs doubtful, who have been uſed to it from childhood, are too ſeldom ſatisfied with the ſhare that is cheerfully given them. In order to exalt themſelves, they endeavour to lower others, and thus combine in this, and in this alone, with the fortuitous poſſeſſors of wealth, in raiſing a pile to their own greatneſs, on a foundation of popular awe and admiration.

I might here ridicule the paſſion, which, while it apes a royal deportment, and would arrogate divine honours, really ſinks a man beneath his ordinary level, in the opinion of the ſenſible

ſenſible part of the world; and had it no other effect than this, it would be more properly the object of ridicule, than of ſerious admonition. But, alas! pride is not to be treated with ſo lenient a hand; it is a wild, luxuriant ſhoot, which can never be properly trained, but muſt, for the benefit of the whole, be entirely lopped off.

Begin, then, with the proud man, in his own family! view him, as ſurrounded by his ſervants, by his wife and children! Here it is, that he daily and hourly practiſes thoſe leſſons, the public exhibition of which produces ſuch general abhorrence: his ſervants are unhappily connected with him

him for a limited time; his wife can hope for no period to her ſufferings, but his, or her own diſſolution; his children are doubly affected, being perpetually wounded by the moroſeneſs of his manners, and in continual danger of imbibing them themſelves. His orders are all given with the air of a tyrant; inſtead of a requeſt, a deſire, or a wiſh, no language is heard, but the harſh language of command: the greateſt exertion can never meet with praiſe, becauſe the greateſt exertion is inceſſantly required.—The utmoſt expectation of his miſerable dependents is, to eſcape cenſure and abuſe. Within his houſe, it may literally

terally be ſaid, dwell diſcontent and ſorrow.

Let us now follow him abroad, and obſerve how he mixes with mankind more at large; and here I need but juſt hint, that habits ſo deeply rooted, are not very eaſily ſhaken off; by the obſerving eye, he is immediately detected; let him attempt as long as he pleaſes, to clothe his face in ſmiles, let him try to attune his voice to gentleneſs, the impoſſibility of accompliſhing his efforts, ſerves but the more forcibly to diſplay his true character. No man can be always guarded; as an excellent writer has obſerved,

ſerved, " when Nature is ſhut out at " the door, ſhe will ſtill peep in at " the window." The ſmile that was deſigned to expreſs complacency, inſenſibly varies into the ſneer of contempt; and the tone of pity is now and then raiſed into the harſher note of anger. Indeed, it is wiſely ordained by Providence, that the mind, or habit of the ſoul, is legibly enough ſtamped on the exterior part of man, and it is commonly in vain that he endeavours to conceal its impreſſion. I am ſure it is ſo with the proud man, who, like the ſilly bird that hides its head, and leaves its body expoſed to danger, very often, when he fancies himſelf the moſt enveloped, is the

moſt open to the comments of the obſerving.

But it is not always ſo with pride; it is more frequently diſpoſed to diſplay its glittering plumage, than to hide its blemiſhes, or defects. Its landed poſſeſſions, its monied property, its manſions, and ſplendid equipages, are its darling theme; and, in its high regard for them, it learns to deſpiſe poverty; nothing being more common among the great of every nation, than *contemptuous* language when they ſpeak of the Poor. The *mob*, the *vulgar*, and ſuch terms, ſufficiently expreſs the eſtimation they are held in, even by thoſe who occaſionally

ſionally do them acts of kindneſs. The ingratitude and envy of people of low condition are railed at, without its being ever once remembered, that whilſt the rich make an oſtentatious diſplay of their riches, the uneducated, unprincipled Poor, will wiſh for a part of that wealth which gives ſo much conſequence, and that it is impoſſible to be grateful for benefits, which were conferred, only becauſe it was faſhionable to give money: a man is more won by a word of gentleneſs, by a ſingle look of attention, than by the gift accompanied with harſhneſs, although it may relieve his neceſſity, and in reality more is conferred to be grateful for; few in this country are in

abſolute want of bread, but all are ſenſible to inſult; every poor man knows that the pride of affluence can wound him, he often feels that it does; but the aſperity of his nature is ſoftened by the benignant aſpect of his ſuperiors, and retains a long impreſſion of their gentle treatment: he is forgetful often of the relief that was careleſsly, or inſultingly afforded; but I muſt be ſo far an advocate for human nature as to inſiſt, that he is ſeldom ungrateful to real generoſity.

Not only are the Poor ſpoken ſlightingly of, but if ever they ſhew the leaſt independence of ſpirit; if ever they repel inſult with an appear-

ance

ance of contempt, they are by the proud man perſecuted with unremitting rigour. Haughty himſelf, he cannot bear the leaſt of it in others, and he is ever the firſt to detect it: whether it be expreſſed in the voice, the attitude, or the eye, it is equally ſtinging: pride alone is wounded by pride, as hard bodies only emit fire when ſtruck by hard bodies. To meet with oppoſition where ſervility was expected; to find the erect ſpirit of man, inſtead of the cringing, fawning ſpaniel, alas, is too exaſperating! What human creature with lofty notions of his own importance can bear it?—No, all muſt ſubmit to him; all muſt, as it were, be annihilated before

before him. He lives commonly ſurrounded by flatterers, an abject, ſelfiſh race of men, who enter into his ſentiments to bring about their own ends; have ſeemingly no will of their own, and yet abſolutely govern his; divert his humanity, ſo long as he has the leaſt of it about him, from its proper objects, the needy and diſtreſſed, and procure all his favours to themſelves; unfit him for laudable ſociety, and thus render him the object of contempt and abhorrence, inſtead of being what he aimed at, a man beloved, reſpected, and adored.

Thus have I pointed out, what I conſider as the greateſt evils of ſociety,

or rather, what are the ſources of the greateſt evils, *diſcontent* and *envy* among the Poor, and *pride* in the Rich; and oppoſite as ſeem theſe affections of the mind, they ſpring, as I conceive, from the ſame root. Diſcontent, what is it, but a diſſatisfaction with the ſituation in which one is placed? What is envy, but a deſire to poſſeſs one's ſelf of ſome advantage another enjoys? Pride has too great a regard for thoſe advantages, and a turgid ſtate of mind is produced in conſequence of being poſſeſſed of them. The diſcontented man is always in danger of becoming envious; and the envious, were he maſter of what he covets, one may venture to aſſert,

would

would not long retain the virtue of humility; whilſt, on the contrary, the meek and lowly-minded, reduced from affluence to want, ſubmits without repining to the diſpenſations of Providence.

Theſe paſſions all ſpring from irreligion; I do not mean, that they are to be ſeen in thoſe only who ſcoff at devotion; who profeſs to "live "without God in the world;" who deride his ordinances, and diſbelieve his revelations; of ſuch men I ſpeak not; to ſuch, what I am now writing will, perhaps, appear contemptible; for as they affect to believe the preſent life the whole of their exiſtence, they

they will by every method, fair and unfair, endeavour to arrive at diſtinction; and when they have gained their end, they will certainly let ſlip no opportunity of diſplaying their honours, their titles, and their wealth. The irreligion I mean, may and often does ſubſiſt, with great appearance of regularity in devotional exerciſes, even with a regard to many moral duties; but it is a want of entire reliance, entire confidence, in the aſſurances and promiſes of the Almighty. God has declared himſelf to be "no reſpecter "of perſons:" this declaration cannot relate to the preſent life, becauſe ſome are born to miſery, and inherit

misfortune; it muſt bear a reference, therefore, to a future ſtate of exiſtence: in that ſtate all who have deſerved, all who are capable of felicity, will enjoy it, and in the very degree the propenſities they have acquired here, will admit of. Now knowing this, which every one may know, who has the opportunity of reading the *ſcriptures*, and believing it, which all muſt, who give credit to their authority, how abſurd, how inconſiſtent, how repugnant to that belief is it, to repine at the unequal diſtribution of the goods of fortune, or to look down with contempt on thoſe who poſſeſs them not? Can he who ſays, "Lord thou haſt

"wiſely

" wiſely ordered all things," even wiſh to deprive any one of his poſſeſſions? Can the heart grateful to God for what it enjoys, ever harbour diſguſt or diſlike to any human being, becauſe undiſtinguiſhed here by the favours of the Almighty? Impoſſible; the ſentiments are irreconcileable with each other; and notwithſtanding all appearances and profeſſions, it muſt be ſuſpected, that they who *ſeem* pious, and are either diſcontented, envious, or proud, have not true piety in their hearts: they may pray for favours, but they are not ſatisfied with ſuch as the God of the univerſe pleaſes to beſtow upon them: they may wiſh to avert

misfortunes, and being ſenſible that they cannot effect it themſelves, that they cannot command even one moment of futurity, that an unexpected turn of events may reduce them to the ſtate of beggary they ſo much deſpiſe, they may petition Superior Power to conduct the affairs of the world in the train they have hitherto moved; but they leave not themſelves, and all they have, to his abſolute diſpoſal; they acknowledge him not as the giver of all good; they worſhip him from neceſſity, not love; and by an outward obſervance of his commands, and a ſhew of reſpect for them, they hope to impoſe on him who ſeeth all hearts,

hearts, and knoweth all thoughts; they hope to gain his protection, or rather to bribe him by a few prayers and ſupplications, to allow them to remain in that ſtate of exaltation, from whence originates all their pride, and all their harſhneſs to their fellow-creatures.

But true religion will teach us to have very different notions of the Deity, far other ſentiments reſpecting our ſituation in this world, and of courſe to regulate our actions and our thoughts by more juſt and better principles.

The

The truly religious man believes that every thing was created by the power of God; and obſerving the order and regularity with which the univerſe is conducted, the change of the ſeaſons, the budding and bloſſoming of plants, the return of the ſun and moon, and all the heavenly hoſt at their exact and appointed times; he believes alſo that God is infinitely wiſe, as well as infinitely powerful: he may alſo infer, that a Being infinitely powerful and infinitely wiſe, muſt be infinitely holy, juſt and pure. Acknowledging this, which all muſt who are capable of juſt reflection, it will neceſſarily follow, that the Being who

who regulates and conducts the movements of all things, can, whenever he thinks proper, controul or ſuſpend thoſe movements, can divulge his will to all or to any particular people, in what place, or at what period he ſhall think moſt fit; nor is the wiſeſt of men, with all his boaſted wiſdom, equal to the deciſion of the propriety or impropriety of its being done on this or that particular occaſion; all he can ſurely know is, that the Almighty has that power, and by the authority on which the book called the Bible is founded, the religious man will farther believe, that his power has already been exerciſed to that purpoſe;

and that the ſacred Scriptures contain a revelation of the will of God: he will diligently therefore ſtudy them, particularly the part called the New Teſtament, in which he will find ſuch precepts as will moſt aſſuredly make him happy here, if diligently obſerved, and prepare him for happineſs hereafter; he will obſerve, in the life of the divine perſon there recorded, a moſt perfect conformity to the doctrines he delivered, an example of every virtue, carried, indeed, to a height mortals cannot attain, but which it was undoubtedly meant they ſhould endeavour to imitate; he will be truly thankful for the moſt gracious promiſe

of

of the forgiveneſs of ſins, on true repentance and a ſincere renunciation of them; and he will ever have in view, amidſt all the temptations this world may hold out, its gay and beautiful ſcenery, its promiſes of eaſe and ſecurity, reſpect, affluence, and honours, that were all its flattering appearances realiſed, they can continue but for a ſhort time; that the ills which threaten, pain, poverty, contempt, and death, are the moſt diſtreſſing in the diſtant proſpect, that they are all admitted into the world by its Supreme Governor for the wiſeſt and beſt purpoſes; that they are deſigned as trials to man to prepare him

for a happy exiſtence, where no change can ever take place, and where Diſcontent, Envy, and Pride, can never enter.

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